



**US Army Corps  
of Engineers**

North Central Division

# GREAT LAKES LEVELS

## UPDATE NO. 25

### 3 AUGUST 1987

After continuously reporting on dangerously high lake levels throughout my tenure in North Central Division, I am pleased that my last update to you can be about improved conditions, with the levels of Lakes Superior and Ontario now slightly below their mean monthly levels. The middle Great Lakes are still quite high but markedly improved over the record high levels of this time last year. This improved condition was despite of the fact that above normal rainfall was received in the Lake Superior, Erie and Ontario basins. The high waters still on the middle lakes could cause significant flooding and erosion during the next fall and spring storm seasons.

The International Joint Commission (IJC) is continuing to direct the outflows for Lakes Superior and Ontario. With Lake Superior near its long-term mean level, which is generally considered the optimum condition, and Lakes Michigan-Huron still quite high, the Lake Superior outflow is at the minimum rate allowed by the regulation plan, that is, 55,000 cubic feet per second (cfs). With the large volume of water upstream of Lake Ontario still to come down, the IJC has deemed it prudent to keep Criterion (k) operative. However, high discharge rates combined with the lower Lake Ontario levels were causing low water levels along the St. Lawrence River. Those low river levels were causing problems for shore property owners, boaters and marina operators. Therefore, on July 27, the IJC directed that a different procedure, based on using the actual lake levels to determine the Plan 1958-D outflows, be initiated to improve the river depths.

The Corps of Engineers is continuing the Advance Measures Program to construct preventive works prior to flooding. To date, there has been little change in the program since my 1 July 1987 update. In view of the much improved situation, our efforts will be limited to constructing the pending projects as quickly as possible with no new requests being entertained.

The Corps is also authorized to assist local communities in responding to actual flooding situations, to supplement maximum state and local efforts. Requests for assistance should be directed through local and state disaster assistance agencies. For Great Lakes basin technical assistance or information, please contact one of the following Corps of Engineers District Offices:

For New York, Penn. & Ohio  
Colonel Daniel R. Clark  
Cdr, Buffalo District  
1776 Niagara Street  
Buffalo, NY 14207-3199  
(716) 876-5454-Ext. 2201

For Mich., Minn. & Wisc.  
Colonel Robert F. Harris  
Cdr, Detroit District  
P. O. Box 1027  
Detroit, MI 48231-1027  
(313) 226-6440 or  
226-6441

For Ill. & Indiana  
LTC Jess J. Franco  
Cdr, Chicago District  
219 S. Dearborn St.  
6th Floor  
Chicago, IL 60604-1797  
(312) 353-6400


You can still get the "Help Yourself" brochure from the District Offices listed above or from this office: North Central Division, 536 South Clark Street, Chicago, Illinois 60605-1592, telephone: (312) 353-6364.

Near-shore wave warnings are provided by various National Weather Service Offices for certain portions of the Great Lakes. Information can normally be heard on the National Weather Service's local weather radio broadcasts.

The Corps of Engineers' "Self Help" program of distributing sandbags, sand and plastic sheeting to threatened communities is continuing. In view of the current and predicted lake levels, it is our intention to continue the program through next spring. You should call your local or state disaster assistance agencies to obtain materials and assistance under this program.

On the IJC's Great Lakes water level study, progress continues on the development of study plans. Copies of the IJC's Lake Levels Study Directive are available from both the U.S. and Canadian Section Offices of the IJC.

On a more personal note, as I mentioned above, this is the last monthly bulletin I will sign as Commander and Division Engineer of the North Central Division. I am being reassigned to the Defense Mapping Agency in Washington on 13 August 1987. I will be replaced by Brigadier General Theodore Vander Els. The past two years have been unprecedented on the Great Lakes for high lake levels, channel flows and in some areas precipitation. I hope these bulletins have been of benefit to you and have provided meaningful information during the high water crisis.

  
JOSEPH PRATT  
Brigadier General, USA  
Commanding